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SUBJECT: SOMALILAND/SOMALIA: SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT, UK
DIASPORA'S MAIN CONCERNS

REF: A. LONDON 2080
[1](#)B. LONDON 2188

[1](#)1. (SBU) In a November 8 discussion on U.S. policy in Somalia, Somaliland Diaspora leaders representing over twenty UK-based Somali organizations said that security and development in Somaliland are their main concerns. They offered the following political and development policy suggestions:

-- The Somaliland executive is overwhelmed by domestic and international security threats. The USG should provide support to the police, prisons, and courts as a matter of priority.

-- This year food prices have increased significantly, with the price of a sack of rice rising from USD 20 to USD 50. Food aid assistance and support to the agricultural sector would help stabilize food supplies and prices.

-- Somaliland could play a useful role in helping support the stabilization of southern Somalia and should have representation and be on the agenda at regional meetings with the Transitional Federal Government.

-- Thousands of "refugees" from southern Somalia and Ethiopia are in Hageysa and other major cities in Somaliland, draining Somaliland's meager resources and presenting a security liability. As the international community terms these individuals "internally displaced persons," Somaliland does not received international aid. The international community should move beyond definitions and provide support to these individuals and to Somaliland for hosting them.

-- The younger Somaliland generation is not being trained or involved in governance because the Somaliland executive does not have a retirement age and individuals must be at least 35 years old to contest in elections. Establishment of a retirement age and lowering the minimum age requirement to stand in elections would involve and train younger Somalilanders in governance.

-- More support should be given to women in government. Mandating a certain percentage of positions for women in all branches of government should be considered.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Somaliland Diaspora leaders in London also argued that Somaliland's recognition as an independent state, while secondary to security and development concerns, would give greater access to the types of resources necessary to ensure security and to curb the Islamic fundamentalist threat from within. "Peace needs resources," they said, and the only way to get adequate resources for the justice and education sectors, in particular, is through international recognition. Some also expressed concern that the global economic downturn will severely limit the amount of remittances going into Somaliland, on which the country is heavily dependent.

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